

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-11 EUR-12 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3244

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 1653

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AO, NI, US

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST REPORT ON GARBA PRESS CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 30983

1. NIGERIAN PRESS ACCOUNTS OF GARBA MEETING WITH JOURNALISTS DIFFERS SOMEWHAT FROM THAT CARRIED BY "WASHINGTON POST" (REFTEL). ACCORDING "NEW NIGERIAN" (UNDER HEADLINES "U.S. HARDLY HAS ANY POLICY IN AFRICA -GARBA"), NIGERIAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER TOLD PRESS THAT HE AND SECRETARY HAD NOT DISCUSSED CONCRETE SOLUTION TO THE ANGOLAN ISSUE "...WE DO NOT SEE EYE-TO-EYE ON THE MATTER..." BUT DID AGREE TO "KEEP IN TOUCH." GARBA, ACCORDING NIGERIAN PRESS, SAID THAT SECRETARY HAD TOLD HIM HE HAD NOTHING AGAINST THE MPLA AND IF RPT IF IT BECAME NECESSARY, THE UNITED STATES WOULD SHIFT ITS POLICY OF SUPPORTING THE OTHER TWO RIVAL ANGOLAN FACTIONS. BUT THE STORY THEN NOTES THAT IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION, GARBA SAID DR. KISSINGER HAD GIVEN NO RPT NO SIGN OF A POLICY CHANGE "BUT IT (A CHANGE) WOULD BE A SHIFT IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IF HE WERE TO DO SO (MAKE A CHANGE)".

2. IN VIEW ABOVE, IT APPEARS THAT VERSION OF GARBA'S PRESS CONFERENCE AS REPORTED BY NIGERIAN PRESS IS MORE ACCURATE DESCRIPTION OF GARBA/KISSINGER CONVERSATION THAN THE "WASHINGTON POST" ACCOUNT (REFTEL). GARBA APPARENTLY HAS NOT YET RETURNED TO LAGOS FROM U.S. AND LONDON (ACCORDING ONE SOURCE)

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HE DUE BACK TOMORROW OR WEDNESDAY). IT UNLIKELY THAT

ANY DEMARCHE WE MIGHT MAKE, IN ABSENCE GARBA'S FIRST HAND REPORT (AS OF LAST FRILAY, MINISTRY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS HAD RECEIVED NO RPT NO INFORMATION ABOUT MEETING), WOULD BE CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE BY MEA.

3. IN VIEW ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, WE RECOMMEND AGAINST MAKING DEMARCHE TO FMG REQUESTED REFTTEL. IG DEPARTMENT BELIEVES IT NECESSARY THAT NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT BE REMINDED OUR ANGOLAN POLICY HAS NOT CHANGED (WHICH IS WHAT GARBA SAID ACCORDING NIGERIAN PRESS), WE SUGGEST AMBASSADOR SANU (WHO WAS PRESENT AT MEETING)

BE CALLED IN AND GIVEN THE WORD.
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